



QUALITY FOCUS ESSAY

H. Quality Focus Essay

Selection Process of the Action Projects for the Quality Focus Essay

Los Angeles Southwest College has made progress and improvements since the last comprehensive team visit in March 2012. Thereafter, two follow-up visits with reports occurred in April 2013, and in April 2014. These two follow-up visits were the result of findings from the Accreditation Evaluation Team that conducted the comprehensive visit in March 2012. Subsequently, the Evaluation Team made six recommendations. When the College began its current self-evaluation activities in fall 2014, we focused our attention on identifying areas of institutional effectiveness and quality improvements that were previously addressed in the recommendations received following our 2012 comprehensive visit. As the College began to develop the 2015 self-evaluation report, evidence emerged indicating that the College should take action in specific areas to improve educational quality and institutional effectiveness in order to support and improve student learning and achievement. In this essay, three areas requiring the development of action projects are described based on evidence from our 2015 self-evaluation report. This essay will discuss the specific themes that emerged and that will require continued development, institutionalization, or expansion.

Two of the recommendations mentioned above represent the Evaluation Team findings from the 2012 and 2006 comprehensive visits. The first recommendation indicated that the College should use the developed planning model to improve institutional effectiveness and improve the quality of programs and services. The college interpreted this to mean that planning, assessment, and implementation of improvement plans, as they are related to the College's processes and operations, is essential to the College's continued effectiveness. Further, the second recommendation from 2012, and 2006 found that the College should work to ensure that students, no matter how they receive instruction, have access to the same high quality of services and these services must be reliable, appropriate, and comprehensive. These two recommendations are a focus in this essay because our analysis of the evidence in the 2015 Self Evaluation Report indicates that the College has not fully addressed these elements as they are related to the new ACCJC Standards. For example, while there may be additional areas of the new Standards that the College does not meet, we have chosen to focus attention on developing action plans in the following areas. Thus, the broad areas that emerged from the analysis of evidence in the 2015 Self Evaluation Report are planning and assessment, student learning outcomes, professional development, and resource allocations. These themes were discussed in workshops and retreats where constituent groups representing students, faculty, and staff were included. Elements of Standards I, II, III, and IV will be identified as they relate to the areas of focus. The specific elements of the Standards will be addressed in the chart that describes the action plans that will be used as a guide to improve student learning, educational quality, and institutional effectiveness.

The College began the self evaluation process for the March 2016 comprehensive evaluation team visit in the fall of 2014. While preparing the 2015 Mid-Term report, themes also emerged related to assessment of student learning, assessment of planning processes,

program review, and an evaluation of programs and services we offer students. Using the elements of the Strategic Plan to guide the College in improving the quality of services and processes, the College determined that these activities should be ongoing. In addition, during the development of the 2015 Midterm report as well as during the development of the 2015 Self Evaluation Report the College determined that a divergence between plans and subsequent action continues. The 2006 recommendations addressed the College’s limited focus on creating viable plans for staff development for all employees and establishing a Distance Education program beginning with the development and subsequent submission of a Substantive Change Proposal to the Commission. Moreover, integrating the plans that have been developed to address our enrollment, technology, career and technical education programs and services have not been addressed to the extent that the College can improve institutional effectiveness in these key areas.

While the College should use the elements of all Commission Standards to guide the development of plans to improve institutional effectiveness, there are specific elements of the Standards that provide the College with a viable guide to assist the college in making improvements. For example, during the development of the 2015 Self Evaluation Report it became clear that the College had not completed the assessment cycle for 100 percent of all courses, programs, and degrees. Although learning outcomes are described for all LASC active courses, the College must demonstrate that the outcomes developed for the courses are assessed and the results are used to determine whether students demonstrate what they have learned. More importantly, establishing outcomes and assessing the outcomes to improve the effectiveness of College instructional programs and student support services is essential.

The chart below describes the crosswalk the College developed to identify the relationship between the 2002 standards and the 2014 Standards.

Recommendations 2012	2002 Standards	2014 Standards
College Recommendation 1	I.B.3, I.B.4, I.B.6	I.B, I.B.2, I.B.3, I.B.4,
College Recommendation 2	II.A.2.b, II.A.2.h, II.A.6.c	II.A.1, II.A.1,II.A.2.b,d,e,f, ER 9,
College Recommendation 3	III.B.3.a	III.B.2
College Recommendation 4	II.C.1, II.C.2, III.D.1.a	II.B, II.B.1, II.B.4, III.D
College Recommendation 5	III.A.1.b	III.A.14, III.C.4
College Recommendation 6	IV.A.3	IV.A.2.b

This crosswalk was used to assist the College during the analysis of evidence that emerged from the 2015 Self Evaluation Report. During the College’s fall 2014 Planning Retreat and during subsequent planning retreats and meetings to address the review and analysis of the College’s Strategic Plan, Educational Master Plan, Facilities Plan, and Technology Plan, dialog about needed changes and improvements to enhance student learning and achievement occurred. This dialog continued in subsequent meetings of College Council, the Budget and Planning, and the Strategic Planning Committee.

As mentioned previously, based on the analysis of the evidence, or lack thereof, information emerged from activities to develop the 2015 Midterm and 2015 Self Evaluation Report that focused the College's attention on needed changes, and improvements that should be made to improve student learning and achievement as well as our overall institutional effectiveness. The three "plans for improvement" are summarized below. These plans will be integrated into the College's ongoing planning and decision-making processes. The plans include multi-year timelines for completion during the next seven-year cycle. Components of the improvement plans include:

- Identification of the improvement plan
- The College's desired goals
- Actions to implement the plans
- Timeline
- Parties responsible for implementation and sustainability of the plans
- Resources
- Evaluation of the outcomes and effectiveness of the plans

These plans are not static, and even as this essay is written, components of the plans will be further refined prior to the 2016 Comprehensive Team visit in March. Components of the plans will be discussed at Strategic Planning Retreats, Accreditation Workshops, and Professional Development sessions, on a consistent basis. The three areas of focus for the plans are: (1) Learning Outcomes Assessment, (2) Planning Integration (3) Professional Development. The information below further describes the action projects, related to the Standards, that will need change, development, and improvement to ensure the College will identify, implement, report, and evaluate the action projects described below.

Action Project 1: Learning and Service Outcomes Assessment

Part I – Background

During the development of the 2015 Midterm report, analysis of the evidence used in the 2014, and 2013 follow-up reports indicated that the College should continue to implement the recently developed plan to conduct learning outcomes assessments for instructional, student and administrative services areas of the College. Planning agendas in the reports identified the primary tool for analysis as the Program Review process. Through this process the College determined what resources were needed for what programs. However, outcomes assessments for SLOs, PLOs, GELOs and ILOs were not taking place during a regular cycle in all instructional and non-instructional areas. In some cases, outcomes assessments had not been conducted at all. While evidence on student learning and achievement was collected by the College's Research Department this data along with established learning outcomes for active courses, certificates, and degrees was not being assessed to determine the effectiveness of those outcomes on student learning and achievement.

Part II – Findings from the Standards Analysis

As the College began to emerge from the consequences of the decline in student enrollment evidence indicated the need for the College to validate that instructional programs and services were reaching all segments of the intended population. This meant that the review of outcome assessment data would be useful in developing planning agendas to address success rates for all students. With this in mind, in 2014 the College reviewed its mission statement and made appropriate changes. The College will continue to review the mission statement, as appropriate to further define its intentions to help students learn and achieve academic success no matter the mode of delivery. Further, since 2011 the College has implemented newly developed plans to improve institutional effectiveness and academic quality. Further, the College strives to consistently determine effective ways to increase the engagement in the improvement of processes to support student learning and achievement. (Standards I.A.1, 1.B.1, 1.B.2, I.B.6, I.B.9, II.A.1, II.A.3, II.A.4, II.A.6, II.A.12, II.A.13, II.A.14, II.B.1, II.B.3, II.C.3, II.C.2, II.C.5, II.C.7, III.A.6, III.C.4, III.D.1, IV.B.3)

Part III - Timeline

Action Project 1 – Learning Outcomes: Assessment

When	Phase	Task	Performance Metric	Responsibility
2015-2016	Identify	Assign full-time faculty Coordinator to assist faculty and staff in identifying plan to map SLOs, ILOs, PLOs and GELOs.	Map 100% of course LOs to ILOs, PLOs, and GELOs for all programs, degrees, and certificates	VP of Academic Affairs, LOs Coordinator Department Chairs
		Identify technology, software, and equipment resources needed to map all LO's		Deans, Academic Affairs and Student Services
		Develop survey tool for use by AA, SS, AS areas to determine level of participation in outcomes assessment by faculty, staff, students	Use survey tool to determine level of campus participation in mapping activity.	Dean, Institutional Research and Advancement, VP AA
		Develop a realistic and achievable timeline to complete a full cycle for 100% of LO assessments by December 2016.	25% of assessments will be completed by September 2016, 25% by January 2017, 25% by April 2017, and 25% September 2017 to ensure 100% completion of all LO assessments by December 2017.	VP Academic Affairs LO Coordinator Department Chairs Deans
		Review and implement current process for GELO, ILO, and PLO assessment and documentation	Document review and make changes to current assessment process	VP Academic Affairs LO Coordinator Deans, Department Chairs

		Review and modify as appropriate LOs for all non-instructional areas	Administrative and Student Services areas review, modify, assessment outcomes as appropriate	Student Services managers and staff Administrative Services managers and staff
2016-2017	Implement	Conduct assessment and document results for all LOs according to established LOs and mapping	100% of instructional, student, and administrative service areas reflect assessment of identified LO's by December 2017	Academic Affairs Student Services Administrative Services
2016-2017	Report	Prepare draft report for review and feedback of campus constituents on the completion of all outcomes assessments. Prepare revised report to be used as baseline for continuous improvement in LOs assessment and implementation	Post report on College website and distribute to Campus constituents. Distribute results and conduct dialog about continued assessments for improvements	VPAA, VPSS, VPAS, ALO, Dean of Institutional Research, Deans, Academic Affairs and Student Services, Department Chairs PIO, President
2017-2018	Evaluate	Use evaluation criteria from outcomes assessment plan to evaluate the outcomes and effectiveness of this Action plan, then implement changes and continue assessment cycle with changes, or improvements	Determine the number of improvement plans to be implemented upon completing the final step of the outcomes assessment plan, Create new strategies to improve the next cycle	VPAA, VPSS, VPAS, ALO, Dean of Institutional Research, Deans, Academic Affairs and Student Services, Department Chairs PIO, President

Action Project 2: Planning Integration

Part I – Background

During the process of examining the evidence to develop the 2015 Midterm Report, the College addressed College Recommendation Number 1. This recommendation was received after the 2012 Evaluation Team visit. After the College's submission of a Follow-up Report and subsequent visit by the Team Chair in 2013, the College received a Commission Action Letter that informed the College of the determination that based on the College's work, College Recommendation 1 had been fully addressed and 2002 Standards I.B.3, I.B.4, I.B.6 had been met.

The College is committed to continuous quality improvement to ensure student learning and achievement. The Strategic Planning Committee, Chaired by the Dean of Research and Institutional Advancement, and co-chaired by a full-time faculty member, has the primary responsibility of engaging the campus community in the planning process. Program Reviews occur on an annual basis, and there are "how to" manuals that assist faculty and staff in the development of instructional and non-instructional Program Review reports. Completed program review documents are archived on the College's website. The Strategic Planning Committee has conducted two evaluations of the planning process. Results from these evaluations are being used to improve this process. The current President participates in Accreditation Workshops and Strategic Planning Retreats. However, engaging more campus constituents in the work of integrated planning is necessary to support and improve student learning and achievement.

Part II – Findings from the Standards Analysis

Campus dialog about the integration of planning processes, in all areas, is not as robust as it could be. While some dialog occurs in the form of status updates on the revision of existing plans, the College believes that dialog about the impact of action items and outcomes assessments resulting from any of the plan elements should occur on a regular basis. Several plans, including the Educational Master Plan, Facilities Masters Plan, and the Technology Plan have not been updated since 2012-2013, and the impact of any revisions to these plans is essential to all planning activities. The College must integrate and align the elements of the Student Equity Plan, and the Student Services and Support Plan into all planning and outcomes assessment activities. Resource elements are a part of the plans and the Colleges must clarify how these resources will be used during the implementation phase of this Action Project. The College's desired outcome of planning integration is the consistent improvement in student learning and achievement, as well as improvements in institutional effectiveness resulting from the use of assessment data and dialog about the evidence from all planning processes, in all areas. During the analysis of the evidence to develop the 2015 Self Evaluation Report the College found that the integration of all college plans was limited. Several 2014 Standards specifically address integrated planning and alignment with outcomes assessments in instructional, student, and administrative service areas. As the

College makes the transition from the 2002 standards to the 2014 standards we view this as an opportunity to re-align our planning to improve institutional effectiveness and increase student achievement. (Standards I.B.1, I.B.2, I.B.3, I.B.4, I.B.7-9, II.A.2, II.A.4, II.A.6, II.A.16, II.B.1, II.B.3, II.C.3-4, III.A.14, III.B.2-4, III.C.2, III.D.1-4, III.D.11, IV.A.2, IV.A.6, IV.B.1).

Part III – Timeline

Action Project 2 – Planning Integration

When	Phase	Task	Performance Metric	Responsibility
2015-2016	Identify	<p>Document and publish status of all current planning documents</p> <p>Develop survey tool and use to determine level of knowledge among campus constituents about all planning documents</p> <p>Review college planning documents to determine alignment with all college and District planning documents</p> <p>Develop achievable and realistic timeline to implement planning agendas based on goals included in planning documents</p>	<p>Status of planning documents will be published on College's "Shared governance Portal"</p> <p>Conduct survey by distributing to all campus constituents, including actively enrolled students.</p> <p>Create functional map to illustrate areas of alignment with College and District plans</p> <p>100% of all plans will be reviewed, and updated including the alignment with college and district plans by December 2016</p>	<p>Dean, Institutional Research,</p> <p>Strategic Planning Committee</p> <p>PIO</p> <p>VPAA, VPSS, VPAS</p>
2016-2017	Implement	<p>Conduct implementation of all integrated planning processes related to specific planning documents, i.e. Technology Plan, Facilities Master Plan, Educational Master Plan, Enrollment Management Plan, and Strategic Plan</p>	<p>100% of all elements of the updated planning documents will be implemented to determine effectiveness of planning components.</p> <p>Data will be published on the college website by December 2017</p>	<p>Dean, Institutional Effectiveness,</p> <p>Strategic Planning Committee</p> <p>Deans, Academic Affairs, Student Services</p> <p>VPAA, VPSS, VPAS</p> <p>PIO</p>
2017-2018	Report	<p>Prepare status report of implementation projects associated with each plan</p> <p>Campus constituents review report and provide feedback to determine the level of</p>	<p>Distribute status reports to campus constituents in fall 2017 for review and feedback</p> <p>Gather feedback data and review previously developed functional map to determine</p>	<p>Dean, Institutional Effectiveness</p> <p>Strategic Planning Committee</p> <p>Deans, Academic Affairs</p>

		integration between each plan	what changes are needed	VPAA, VPSS, VPAS
2018-2019	Evaluate	Conduct evaluation of all planning documents to determine effectiveness	100% of planning documents will be evaluated to determine alignment with College Mission and Vision	Dean, Institutional Effectiveness Strategic Planning Committee Deans, Academic Affairs VPAA, VPSS, VPAS

Action Project Three – Professional Development

Part I – Background

Findings from the 2012 comprehensive evaluation visit indicated that the College did not meet 2002 Standard III.A.1.b. This was listed as College Recommendation 5 in the 2014 Commission Action Letter. In Follow-up Reports submitted by the College during 2013 and 2014, the College addressed the deficiencies that led to this recommendation and later met the Standard requirements. The College took steps to ensure that professional development activities for faculty were defined in a Professional Development Plan, which was created in 2013. The plan will be reviewed and updated in 2016. The Professional Growth Committee conducted surveys to determine faculty attitudes and preferences for activities to assist them in improving student achievement and student learning. A plan is in place to conduct a New Faculty Orientation each fall semester for all incoming faculty. The Professional Growth Committee manages these activities. The College also participates in the District’s Faculty Teaching and Learning Academy that is a joint initiative between the District and the District Academic Senate. Efforts to expand professional development opportunities for the College’s faculty are ongoing. However, several areas of the 2014 Standards indicate that professional development is an area of expansion for *all* employees on campus in support of student learning and achievement and improvements in institutional effectiveness.

Part II – Findings from the Standards Analysis

During the analysis of the evidence for the College’s 2015 Self Evaluation Report, the College found that several elements of the 2014 Standards address professional development of faculty and staff. While the College has a viable professional development plan for faculty, we determined that we must also include activities for staff and administrators. This includes providing opportunities for all College employees that are consistent with the College mission and based on the expanding needs of students. As the College strives to improve student learning and achievement for a diverse student population, as well as improve College operations and practices, these professional development activities also include developing training opportunities for all employees in the use of technology in the classroom and to complete operational activities in various areas of the College. Further, there is a need for developing professional development activities to ensure that all

employees learn about the changes the College must make to improve student learning and to ensure that learning is at the core of all College activities. Opportunities for learning about the integration of program review, planning and resource allocation into a comprehensive process are appropriate to the expansion of a professional development plan. (Standards I.B.9, II.B.1, III.A.14, III.C.4, IV.B.1)

Part III – Timeline

When	Phase	Task	Performance Metrics	Responsibility
2015-2016	Identify	<p>Review current professional development plan</p> <p>Identify components in current plan that can be expanded to include opportunities for learning for all college employees</p> <p>Develop survey tool to assess professional development needs of faculty and other personnel</p> <p>Develop realistic and achievable timeline to conduct professional development workshops or other learning opportunities</p> <p>Determine what processes ensure that professional development activities address identified needs</p> <p>Review current professional development awards activities for all employees</p>	<p>Map components in current professional development plan and create</p> <p>Distribute survey to all college employees. Analyze and publish results</p> <p>Publish timeline to include dates during both spring and fall semester to conduct learning activities</p> <p>Advertise professional development activities</p> <p>Determine strategies for developing a combined awards ceremony for faculty and staff</p>	<p>Dean, Institutional Effectiveness</p> <p>Professional Growth Committee</p> <p>Academic Senate</p> <p>Classified Representatives from all areas on campus</p> <p>Administrators</p>
2016-2017	Implement	<p>Identify resources to support professional development activities during fall and spring semester</p> <p>Determine evaluation criteria for professional development activities</p>	<p>Commit resources to ensure that professional development activities are ongoing</p>	<p>President</p> <p>Administrators</p> <p>Dean, Institutional Effectiveness</p>
2017-2018	Report	<p>Prepare draft report that includes information about participants, and description of professional development activities</p>	<p>Publish and distribute Report to all participants in professional development activities</p>	<p>PIO</p> <p>Dean, of Institutional Effectiveness</p>
2018-2019	Evaluate	<p>Evaluate the impact of professional development activities on the improvement of teaching and learning</p>	<p>100% of professional development activities will be evaluated to identify trends and determine the impact on teaching and learning.</p>	<p>Dean, of Institutional Effectiveness</p> <p>Professional growth committee</p>

I. Changes and Plans Arising out of the Self Evaluation Process

Los Angeles Southwest College used the new Standards as an opportunity to evaluate current practices and identify areas of deficiency to increase effectiveness and focus on student achievement, student learning, and the institutional mission.

Changes

Since the College began writing the self evaluation report in spring 2015, the College has experienced significant administrative turnover.

- The Interim Vice President of Student Services left to take a position at another college in May 2015. A second Interim Vice President of Student Services, who came out of retirement to oversee the Student Services Division, went back into retirement in December 2015. A permanent Vice President of Student Services was hired in December 2015 and will begin in January 2016.
- The Dean of Institutional Effectiveness left to take a position at another college in May 2015. This position has been flown and is expected to be filled in January 2016.
- The Dean of Grants and Special programs left to take a position at another college in June 2015. This position will be filled in the near future.
- The Dean of Student Support Programs left to take a position at another college in December 2015. This position will be filled in the near future.
- The Vice President of Administrative Services retired in December 2015. The College has an Interim Vice President of Administrative Services currently in place. This position will be filled in the near future.
- In addition to these changes, the College will start the process of hiring a Dean of Student Services.

The college has also experienced changes in the SLO Coordinator.

- When the College began writing its self evaluation report in spring 2015, the SLO Coordinator decided to step down in June 2015. The new SLO Coordinator started in July 2015 and stepped down in December 2015. A new SLO Coordinator, the third since the College began writing the self evaluation report, was named in December, and will start in January 2016.

Outside of the SLO Coordinator position, the College has maintained consistency in other faculty leadership positions since the College began writing its self evaluation report in spring 2015. These positions include:

- The Academic Senate President
- The Faculty Guild Chapter Chair
- The Chair of Chairs
- The Curriculum Coordinator
- The Program Review Coordinator

Future Action Plans

1. Update the College's mission statement (I.A.1.).
 - When the mission statement was last reviewed in 2014, the new Standards were not yet available. Now, the College is aware that addressing the types of degrees and other credentials the College offers is part of the new Standards and that the mission statement needs to be modified to address this. The College mission will be reviewed in spring 2016 and updated to address the types of degrees and other credentials the college offers.
2. Assess and evaluate SLOs and PLOs on a regular and continuous cycle (II.A.3.).
 - As noted in the self evaluation report, the College needs to implement a regular and continuous cycle of SLO and PLO assessment. The SLO Committee will review the College's assessment and evaluation process in spring 2016. The goal is to identify SLOs and PLOs that have been assessed and evaluated and those that have not, and place them on a regular and continuous cycle of assessment and evaluation.
3. Complete a substantive change for academic programs where more than 50% of a program can be offered online (ACCJC Substantive Change Requirement).
 - The Commission expects accredited institutions to undertake change responsibly and to continue to meet the Eligibility Requirements, Accreditation Standards, and Commission policies. To provide assurance of institutional quality to the public and to maintain Title IV financial aid funds for students of the institution, a *Substantive Change Proposal* must be submitted and approved by the Commission.
 - The College will be preparing to submit a Substantive Change Proposal to the ACCJC for approval of possibly two programs. The ACCJC has been notified, and the College will begin working on the Substantive Change Proposal in spring 2016 after the March 7, 2016 to March 10, 2016 team visit.
4. Update the College's plans and monitor progress (Standards I.A.3; III.B.3; III.C.2; and II.D.3)

In order to ensure that the mission guides institutional decision-making, planning, and resource allocation and informs institutional goals for student learning, physical resources, technological resources, and financial resources, the College will:

- Update the Educational Master Plan by spring 2016
- Update the Facilities Master Plan by spring 2016
- Update the Technology Master Plan by spring 2016.

5. Evaluate the effectiveness of the resource allocation process in attaining the goals of the College plans (Standard I.A.3).

Although the College meets the standard, the College should review the resource allocation process in light of its growing enrollment, new certificates and ADT's, increasing general fund, and the increase in the SSSP and Equity funds. In addition to the aforementioned funds, the Career Technical Education (CTE), Basic Skills Initiative (BSI), and other restricted funds should be addressed as well. This review will begin in spring 2016, when the permanent Vice President of Administration is hired.